



National Commission on the Future of the Army

2530 Crystal Drive, Zachary Taylor Building, Suite 5000
Arlington, VA 22202

SUBJECT: National Commission on the Future of the Army (NCFA) Staff Site Visit, 28 Sep 15, Fort Bliss, Texas, Minutes

Date: 28 September 2015

Locations: 32nd Air and Missile Defense Command (AAMDC) Headquarters building and Camp McGregor, Fort Bliss

Format: briefings and round table discussion

Attendees:

MG (R) Raymond Carpenter, NCFA Executive Director
Mr. Anthony Boyda, NCFA Staff
COL Kelly Peters, NCFA Staff
COL Kurt Weinand, NCFA Staff
MAJ Benjamin Fernandes, NCFA Staff
Mr. Kerry Schindler, NCFA Staff

Documents Submitted to Commission:

- ADA Facts by the Numbers
- TAA 19-23 Emerging Growth Patriot Battalion
- CMF 14 Marital Status as of 24 Sep 15
- 32nd AAMDC Retention Accomplishments
- 32nd AAMDC Command Brief
- First Army Policy Memorandum 11, Mobilization Standards
- National Training Center Policy 11 (RTU in Cantonment Area)
- RAF Training Requirements 252015ZF
- HQDA EXORD 162-15 Separation History and Physical Evaluation (SHPE) Implementation
- SHPE Overview
- FORSCOM PDTE Strategy

The NCFA Staff arrived at the 32nd AAMDC Headquarters at 0800 hours. The following 32nd AAMDC personnel met with NCFA Staff:

COL Greg Brady, Deputy Commander
COL Shana Peck, Chief of Staff
CSM Gerardo Dominguez, 32nd AAMDC CSM

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The NCFA Staff provided an overview of the Commission's purpose and mission. After introductions, the group moved to the main conference room where approximately 20 members of the AAMDC staff sections were present as observers.

The NCFA Staff received the 32nd AAMDC Command Brief. The following discussion items were discussed during the Command Brief

Recent relief from the Patriot mission in Turkey will enable the Command to change from 12 months to 9 months "Boots on the Ground" rotations for its other Combatant Command requirements. This will also provide enough relief to allow the Command to reinstate a Patriot Battalion in an experimentation role for modernization evaluations. However, if demand for additional Patriot capability arises, ADA Soldiers will have to revert back to 12 months deployments ("no depth on the bench").

32nd AAMDC appreciates the support they receive from 263rd AAMDC (SCARNG). The 263rd AAMDC has sent some Soldiers to EUCOM/USAREUR in Annual Training status to augment 10th AAMDC formations/staff. They have also mobilized Soldiers to support 32nd AAMDC operations in the CENTCOM AOR.

32nd AAMDC did not think adding Patriot capability back to the ARNG would provide additional relief from the high OPTEMPO they are experiencing. They opined maintaining the frequent crew systems qualifications, collective training, and Class IX expenses make Patriot and Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) units impractical as Reserve Component units. 32nd leadership also did not consider multi-component units feasible for Patriots and THAAD due to the high levels of investment and Class IX costs.

ADA Soldiers are high demand/low density and experiencing high stress, which has the potential to harm retention. ADA Soldiers cannot PCS from one U.S. location to another except as part of a re-enlistment contract. If they are stationed in CONUS, their next assignment must be overseas. If an ADA Soldier wishes to reenlist for Regular Army or move to a Reserve Component, they cannot change MOS.

ADA Soldiers returning from Korea often have low dwell time and cannot deploy overseas until they have sufficient time at home station.

The number of command centers and equipment in the Patriot battalion design does not account for split Battery operations. A new design and upgraded equipment under development would put capability in each Battery. Patriot batteries cannot be easily split because all three platoons work together and are not designed for autonomous operations.

32nd AAMDC leaders explained the need for an Army executive agent to lead the development of capabilities for the counter-recon/Unmanned Aerial Systems fight. ADA is not big enough. Fires, Signal, Military Intelligence, and Maneuver all have a role in these capabilities.

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CSM Dominguez discussed his extensive work developing surveys and statistics regarding ADA Soldiers and provided the information after the meeting.

The NCFA Staff departed the 32nd AAMDC Headquarters at 1000 hours for a helicopter flight to Camp McGregor.

The NCFA Staff arrived at Camp McGregor at approximately 1030 hours and was greeted by the following 5th Armored Brigade personnel:

LTC Chris Woody, BDE DCO
LTC Craig Macina, Exercise Planner
LTC Santiago A. Archuleta, Chief of Plans

After a tour of the Camp, the Commission staff met with the following leaders from deploying units at the Camp:

LTC Kurt Kobernik and CSM Alvin Martin, 3-116 IN BN (VA ARNG)
1LT Luis Feliciano and MSG Carlos Baezhernandes, 544 MP Co (PR ARNG)
CPT Rafael A. Rivera and 1SG Edwin Soto, 1010 EN CO (PR ARNG)
CPT David E. Dodson and 1SG Jan A. Spaans, 155 EN CO (SD ARNG)

MG(R) Carpenter explained the purpose and mission of the Commission and emphasized the NCFA Staff was gathering information for potential use by the Commissioners. Each of the units introduced themselves and explained where they were in the mobilization process, their experiences, and their deployment destination.

LTG Tucker's, First Army Commanding General, push to shift First Army from a post-mobilization centric training focus to a pre-mobilization partnership appears to be working. Multiple unit leaders, who had deployed previously, said this post-mobilization deployment training experience was much improved. Redundant training was virtually non-existent, First Army leadership tailored training to meet unit requirements, and there was little wasted time. Pre- and post-mobilization training was scheduled during the pre-mobilization Joint Assessment to minimize duplicative training. Junior leaders indicated the limited "white space" available was important for equipment loading, team building, and other basic, but important, small unit tasks.

Off ramping and mission changes on short notice remain problems for deploying units. However for these units, the previous off ramp helped the unit prepare for a short notice mission. The short notice forced deploying units to take only volunteers. Having volunteers was a positive for this deployment, but caused "cannibalizing" other units and has potential for negative repercussions when Soldiers who lack guaranteed employment return due to the mission's volunteer nature.

The visited units averaged 38 days of post-mobilization training time – 32 days for training and six days for equipment load and other unit activities such as targeted

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training. All units were deploying for missions that did not require combined arms maneuver, which would have required at least an additional week of training.

3-116 Infantry Battalion was sourced against a CENTCOM mission in 2014. They were off ramped at the beginning of calendar year 2015 only to be re-missioned in the spring. The unit decided to find volunteers across the 116 IBCT rather than involuntarily mobilizing the Soldiers who were off ramped. The unit found sufficient volunteers and the Commander was comfortable with his team and the deployment schedule.

155th Engineer Company experienced some equipment and billeting issues. The unit was advised they needed to “borrow” equipment upon arrival in theater because there would be no Theater Provided Equipment (TPE) for them.ⁱ The unit worried they would not be able to maximize their time in theater if they had to wait for equipment. The billeting issues involved inadequate shower facilities in the older billets on Camp McGregor. In at least one facility there were two single stall showers for 80 Soldiers; an additional two showers were inoperable.

1010th Engineer Company, a horizontal engineer¹ unit with dozers, graders, and a significant amount of heavy equipment, experienced the same concerns about Theater Provided Equipment. Additionally, the 1010th EN Co (HORIZ) (PRARNG) was denied an equipment Technical Inspection in Puerto Rico, which required the unit to ship all heavy equipment from Puerto Rico to Ft. Bliss for technical inspection before shipping to theater. Unit leadership stated they may have to wait for months to receive their equipment in theater. Additionally, 1010th required equipment from CONUS ARNG units for post-mobilization training, which created another second destination transportation bill.

The lack of Pre-Deployment Training Equipment (PDTE) created training challenges according to the units and First Army trainers/enablers. Although late, units received some equipment from Ft Hood. However, the provided equipment was insufficient and often required substantial maintenance or parts (e.g. radios). Attendees opined the cost to ship training equipment to/from Ft. Hood was likely more expensive than maintaining equipment on site.

Upon meeting with leaders from mobilizing units, the NCFA Staff returned to the 5th Armored Brigade Conference Room to meet with LTC Woody. 5th Armor Brigade, First Army Soldiers and Civilians, and Ft Bliss Mobilization Team representatives attended as observers. The NCFA Staff received a 5th Armor Brigade Command Brief and a Brigade version of First Army's Bold Shift training initiative.

First Army has about 70% manning. Camp McGregor facilities are structured for a 2-maneuver battalion Brigade Combat Team (BCT) while the Army has started shifting to a 3-maneuver battalion BCT design. Conducting post-mobilization training for a full National Guard BCT would require time to get additional personnel and contracts in

¹ Horizontal construction engineers use bulldozers, cranes, graders and other heavy equipment to move tons of earth and material to complete construction projects for the Army.

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place to support mobilization. Conversely, when mobilizing mission unique units (e.g. civil affairs, etc.), 5th Armored Brigade and First Army must seek outside Subject Matter Experts and specialized equipment to accomplish the mobilization process.

The Army will implement SHPE (Separation History and Physical Evaluation), as directed by the Under Secretary of Defense ((DTM) 14-006), during re-deployment out-processing beginning in 2016. Intent is to document Soldier medical issues resulting from a deployment. Whether additional resources are required to implement this process is not clear at this point. SHPE is anticipated to add at least a week or two to Soldier/unit redeployment out-processing timeline. This program applies to all separating Soldiers regardless of component and to all Reserve Component Soldiers that have been on orders for more than 180 days or more than 30 days for contingency operations.

Consolidation of Mobilization Force Generation Installations (MFGI) to Fort Hood and Fort Bliss means there are a number of first time experiences for training different unit types at these locations. For example, Civil Affairs units previously performed post-mobilization training at Joint Base McGuire-Dix.

Some Camp McGregor billeting facilities used by mobilizing units are in poor repair. Coincidentally, there was a relatively new facility at the Camp (The Alamo), which was unavailable for this set of mobilizing units due to use for the Network Integration Evaluation/Army Warfighting Assessment exercise.

The group discussions were completed at 1530 hours. The NCFA Staff moved from the conference room to the helicopter and flew back to the pickup point at the Ft Bliss Parade Field. The staff used ground transportation to return to the hotel and the day was complete at 1615 hours.

ⁱ Research with FORSCOM indicates the unit was mistaken and TPE would be available upon arrival.